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# Johnny Appleseed

By One Who Knew Him



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## By One Who Knew Him



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## JOHNNY APPLESEED BY ONE WHO KNEW HIM

Several years ago, the members of our Students' Horticultural Society became much interested in the Story of Johnny Appleseed. They looked up all the literature available, but found that there is almost nothing in print that will prove that such a man ever really lived. While this interest was at its height, one of our students, Mr. N. W. Glines, whose home was at Marietta, Ohio, reported that his grandfather had left a manuscript on the life and character of Johnny Appleseed. A request was made at once for a loan of this paper, but for several reasons it did not come into our hands until recently.

The manuscript is written with ink on a good grade of brown wrapping paper. The hand-writing is remarkably clear, but the first three pages are so worn and faded as to make the writing almost illegible. No date accompanies the article, but the family states that it was probably written sometime between the years, 1875 and 1879.

Judging from the introductory remarks in the paper, it must have been written for a lyceum or a debating society which were both common among the young people of a generation ago. Farther on in the narrative it develops that the author was very well acquainted with Johnny Appleseed and with his relatives, so he was able to give first hand information about his subject.

The author, Mr. W. M. Glines, was born in Marietta, Ohio, November 12, 1806 and died at the same place, August 2, 1887. His son, Mr. H. Glines, still lives at Marietta, and a grandson, Mr. N. W. Glines is an assistant in this department of the University.

The older residents of this general region are familiar with the name of Johnny Appleseed and with fragments of stories concerning his peculiarities and of his passion for planting apple trees in advance of civilization. A number of apple trees in various parts of Ohio are still standing which are said to have been planted by his hands.

That his work had a marked influence on the development of commercial fruit growing in this region cannot be doubted, as the hills along the banks of the Ohio river became famous for their productive orchards long ago.

That the labors of Johnny Appleseed finally came to be appreciated is proven by the fact that three monuments have been erected to his memory: one at Mansfield, Ohio, one at Ashland, Ohio, and one at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The University is pleased to have this opportunity to give to the public a real contribution to the early history of this region.

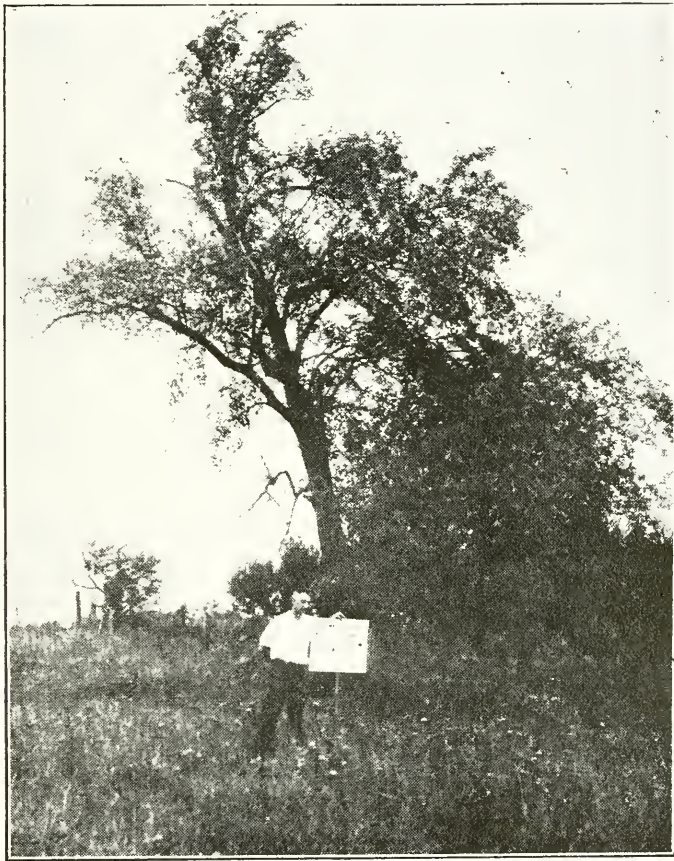
W. PADDOCK,  
*Department of Horticulture.*

April 1, 1921.

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"You can tell one of your stories of long ago: I heard you say once that the young folks of your day used to collect together on long wintery evenings at Sady McIntoshes, Major Clarks, Joel Reigners and Captain Enoch Shepards, Calvin Sheards, Luther Shepards and other neighbors. Every one had to sing a song, tell a good story, dance a jig or have his nose smutted with the candle wick. Now we have been reading 'Howe's Ohio' and a long story in the New York Christian Advocate, commenced July first last 'The Boy Pioneer, or Left in the Wilderness' by Mary A. Roe. The story is laid in the western part of Ohio and goes away back almost a hundred years ago. But what makes it a little strange to us is the fact that she introduces as one of the characters that mythical old man that always goes by the name of 'Johnny Appleseed.' Yet she admits in a short note in the margin that 'Johnny Appleseed' was a real character; for several years back I have been reading more or less about this mythical character. 'Howe's Ohio' speaks of him as if there had such a man once lived away back more than one hundred years ago and I read a year or two since something about him in one of the newspapers published in some of the northwestern Counties of Ohio, that intimated that there had been such a man once in the wilderness and was supposed to have originated there through some emigrant family and became lost in the wilderness while very young.

"I don't like such stories. They don't begin any place and they don't end any place. They have you all in the dark about just what you want to know. Mary A. Roe's story is a very good one, but would have been better if she had left out that



Tree from one of Johnny Appleseed's nurseries near Ashland.

old myth 'Johnny Appleseed.' Now we don't know whether there ever was such a man or not. Everybody that has introduced him as a character in their stories have left him shine out as being a very strange personage and then they leave him. Well, children how would you like to have a rehash of old Johnny Appleseed. Very well, if you can only tell us where he came from and

who he was or whether there was such a man. If you can't do that, let's bury him forever. Now Grandpa, look out for the candle smut.

"Well, children, be seated now and listen attentively and I will tell you what I know and have heard from others who knew all about 'Johnny Appleseed.' Long before the Revolutionary War there came to America from England, a man by the name of 'Nathaniel Chapman' who it is said was a Welshman. In the time of the war, Mr. Chapman, was made a Captain and held his commission as such to the close of the war. He became so enlisted in behalf of the American people that he spent two good farms to help carry on the war. At the close of the struggle he was a poor man.

"Mr. Chapman was married twice, his first wife's name is not known at the present time by any of the family; by her, he had two children, John and Elizabeth; his second wife, was Lucy Cooley, by whom he had ten children, five boys and five girls, Nathaniel, Abner, Parley, Jonathan and Davis. The latter is now living in the County near to Lowell, and is a man about 78 years old, smart and active. The girls' names were, Lucy, Martha, Percees, and Sally. These are all half brothers and sisters to 'Johnny Appleseed.' John, (for that was really his name) was born in Massachusetts near to 'Bunker Hill' in 1768.

He is said to have been a very smart, intelligent young man. At about the age of 21 years, he received a kick from a horse that fractured his skull, which was trepaned at the time. From that time forth he manifested that singular character attributed to him. At about the age of 28 years he succeeded in inducing his half brother, Nathaniel, to run away with him. Nathaniel was a boy about 14 or 15 years old at the time. They made their way through the wilderness on foot to "Fort Duquesne," now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

From there they went up the Alleghany to Olean in the State of New York where they remained about one year. The country being new and unsettled, they often suffered for want of the necessaries of life. Johnny finally concluded that he must go to Pittsburgh for provisions, and leave his brother to do the best he could; he said one would live there better than two, unless they had more provision. At length he left his young brother to look out for himself. Some way or another, not

exactly known, Johnny succeeded in procuring a muley steer which he led by a halter all the way to Pittsburgh and back again to his brother, using him as a pack horse for whatever he could procure. He was gone on this trip about four weeks. During Johnny's absence Nathaniel became very much reduced and must have starved to death, but for a tribe of Indians who were wandering through the country who found and relieved him of his suffering; they taught him the use of the bow and arrow to success in killing small game.

During the winter Johnny wanted to go down the river a short distance, and as the ice was running, he concluded to take a small canoe they had procured and started on his journey, but finding it rather troublesome to keep his canoe right side up, he concluded to drag the canoe to the center of a large strong cake of ice. Having succeeded, he laid down in the canoe, made himself as comfortable as he could, went to sleep and when he awoke found himself about 100 miles below where he intended to stop. He, however, managed to return to his brother who had suffered much during Johnny's long delay.

After remaining on the Alleghany about one year they succeeded by some means in getting word to their parents as to their whereabouts, and proposed to meet them at Pittsburgh at a certain time, which proposition was accepted and carried out.

The family being once more brought together, they dug out a large perogue from a poplar tree and in this craft made their way down the Ohio river and landed at Marietta, April 7, 1798.

It being the anniversary of the first landing of the Ohio Company at this point, the citizens young and old, were engaged in a game of foot ball, an exercise they very much delighted in; the family remained in Marietta a year or two, the boys finally went up Duck Creek to a tract of land now known as the John Crop farm, where they made some improvements, and finally moved the family there. Here Johnny first entered upon the business of planting nurseries in the wilderness, having procured seed from some of the settlements about Marietta where fruit trees were in bearing; he gathered from the cider mills then in operation what seed he could obtain and upon this tract of land on Duck Creek began his first experiment as a nursery man; there are trees standing on this farm today, that are still healthy

and in good bearing condition, that were planted by "Johnny Appleseed."

Now Johnny's father died about 73 years ago; when he died Nathaniel and Parley went down the Creek to what is called the cedar narrows near to Salem where there was a saw mill owned by a Mr. Brown; here they obtained lumber and tools and made a rude coffin, which they carried home by tying a cord around each end, then run a pole through the loops and shouldered their load for home. When they got home and had placed the corps in the rude coffin, they dug a grave and buried their father, not in the land of Machpelah, but in the wilderness of Ohio, there to remain until the final Judgment day. There were no neighbors nearer than seven miles, they were few and far between.

From Duck Creek, Johnny went to Delaware, Ohio, where he made a small improvement on some school land, and planted a nursery; the seed for this nursery he carried on his back in a large sack, and when he wanted more he came back to the Muskingum River for them. He visited all the cider mills then in use until he had gathered all the seed he could pack. When they gave out, he would return for more. He often had large quantities in hand ready for use.

From Delaware, Ohio, he went to Sandusky, where he planted a large nursery; how long he remained there I cannot tell; his next point was Mansfield, in Richland County, Ohio; he located on the black fork of the Moheken; he said the creek was named for him and was always spelled and called "Mohekin"; here he planted another nursery; nearby, were two large trees, the tops of which mingled together; up in the tops of those, Johnny managed to fasten his hammock, a practice he had learned from the Indians; there he would sleep, read and sing; when not engaged with his nursery. In his hammock he was as happy as a King. His nursery was the all absorbing object with him. All his work was done by hand, he never worked a horse or other animal, excepting in transporting his luggage from one point to another. What time he left Mansfield I do not know, but he was there in 1819 and must have been there some years prior to that time.

In about 1822 or 23, he turned up at Fort Wayne in Indiana, where it is said he obtained a piece of land in his own name; where he planted a large nursery. While at Fort Wayne,

he made several visits to Ohio in order to obtain more apple seeds. When he could manage to descend a stream in the direction he wished to travel, he would dig out a rude canoe or roll a log into the stream and straddle it, so that he might float in the right direction.

His last visit to Ohio, was in October 1842; Mr. Nathaniel Chapman was a neighbor to me at the time and a very warm friend with all; Johnny made it his home with him while on his visit to his friends. A Mr. John Whitney who married Sally, lived in the neighborhood, was a farmer, and during the summer the lightning had struck a very large black oak tree on Whitney's land, and knocked it to pieces from the top to the roots; and some of the fragments were converted into very comfortable sized rails, and of such lengths as made them convenient for that purpose. Johnny having heard of the circumstance and that Whitney had laid them up in his fence, he and Nathaniel came to my house and would have me go with them to see the rails that were made by lightning; when we got ready to start, I proposed taking my gun along to kill some squirrels or rabbits; to this, Johnny demurred; he read me a severe lecture upon the subject of taking life from any living creature; he maintained that God was the Author of all life, hence it belonged to Him whenever he was ready to demand it, and in as much as we could not give life to any creature, we were not at liberty to destroy life with impunity; after his lecture and to please him, I put up the gun and we moved on. We soon came to a creek that was necessary for us to cross; his brother and myself managed to cross over by stepping from one stone to another, but Johnny having been compelled to accept of a pair of old shoes while he was amongst his friends and had them on, very carefully removed them from his feet and waded over where there was more water; after getting over he rolled up the shoes and stuck them under his arm and plodded on barefoot through the woods and briars until we arrived at the fence in question. He at once commenced an examination, he measured them, counted them, and viewed the roots from whence they came; he then turned to Mr. Whitney and read him a sermon upon the wonderful Providence of God to man. Said he, God has given you a large family of boys, they have cleared you a large farm in the woods, and have worked hard to do it. Making rails is hard and heavy

work. God pitied the boys, hence he sent the lightning to make your rails and he selected that hard old burley tree close by where you most needed them, now said the old man, can't you see it? Whitney hung his head for a moment, then replied, that he always tried to feel thankful to God for His kind care over him and his family, but that he never heard of His making rails for anybody before. Johnny insisted that Whitney must receive all such Providences as special favors from God in token of his goodness. Whitney waved the subject by retorting upon Johnny and asked him how it was with him when he got lost in the woods in the dead of winter and was compelled to dig a hole in the snow bank and crawl in there to save his life. Well, said Johnny, wasn't I a great fool for putting myself in such a situation, but in as much as I had done it, wasn't it a great mercy in God to send snow enough so that I could dig a hole in it and secure myself from freezing? When his attention was called to the many hardships he had endured, he always justified himself by saying that he has chosen his course and his God had never forsaken him; when he was about to do wrong, he always had some warning or notice of the impending danger before hand; he cited many instances among which was one that has been often told of him. On a certain expedition during a winter season, he was overtaken in the wilderness in a severe snowstorm and excessive cold weather. One night he happened to find a large tree that had fallen with the top down hill. The end where it had broke off near the ground was elevated somewhat and afforded good shelter. It being hollow, Johnny seeing it, seized upon that as being a good providence for him, but in attempting to occupy, he found an old bear had already monopolized that shelter. Well, says Johnny, I never disputed the right for one moment, the bear got there first and I left him to enjoy his comfort and sought other quarters, and you see I lived through it all, and I am here today.

He said one thing that happened to him while at Mansfield, always looked a little mysterious to him, but had concluded that the trouble with him was that he had misunderstood the language of God to him. While at Mansfield he had accumulated 10 ponies, and the Indians came up from the Lakes and carried him and the ponies off, without much ceremony. They released him, however, but kept all his ponies. He could read his release all



right, but how about the ponies; there he stuck; but finally concluded that they had more need of them than he had, hence the distribution. He was very much disturbed with the extravagance of the world at large, particularly in the article of dress. He would often have one leg of his pantaloons made of one kind and color of cloth and the other entirely of another kind and quality. Buckskin was his favorite when he could obtain it. Moccasins were his favorite foot covering. Shoes he abhorred. While on his last visit to Ohio in 1842, his niece, Miss Rebecka Chapman made him a shirt, one half calico, the other muslin. On the one of the muslin, were two large letters, perhaps A. D. These he had so arranged that one was on either side of the bosom. That seemed to please him. At one time he obtained a large coffee sack. He opened a hole in one end and slipped his head through then letting it fall around him. This he thought was a fine improvement. He cut holes through the sides for his arms. He was equally singular about his food; he always preferred to take his lunch by himself out doors. He seldom ate his meals inside of a house, and what is still more curious, whatever he commenced on he would end with, making his entire meal of the one article. He frequently lived on fruit and nuts in their season. He once hired a young man to help him a little about his work, and at meal time he took him to his den and set out a quantity of Black Walnuts for him to make his meal out of them. To this the young man demurred and finally left in disgust. Now with all the singular traits of this man's character, he was kind to everybody he met and with all he was benevolent. He has been known to give for benevolent purposes 5-10-15 and even \$50. He generally had money. He was never known to go about the country begging, yet he would travel great distances through the snow barefoot. Take all kinds of risks of consequences. At one time while contemplating a change in location, having some money on hand, he was afraid the Indians would steal from him (yet had no fear of personal injury) he hid his money under the roots of a large tree where the ground had caved away from the roots. He crawled under the roots and secreted his treasure there. It remained there for three years. He finally returned and found it all safe; at another time he climbed up the comb of the roof of his cabin and stuck his money under the clapboards in such a way as to hide it from

view. It remained there for over one year all safe upon his return. He had a tin kettle that he carried on his head in lieu of a hat in which he made his mush which he ate without water, and when he could get sugar he used that in sweetening water for his mush. He never was known to destroy the life of any living thing, save one snake that fastened itself upon his foot or old pants. Then he dropped the head of his sythe upon its head and went off and left the sythe and snake together, but afterward returned for the sythe and said he found the poor fellow there. He would often examine the old wood that he was about to put on the fire and if a worm or ants or any living thing was found connected with it, he would either knock them all off or throw the wood to one side.

His religion was that of the Swedenborgian persuasion. He was a constant reader and would often tear a Book in pieces to distribute as he passed through the country. Much that I have said about him I have gathered from his relatives who are a very respectable lot of people, and are perfectly reliable. Other incidents related are from published reports.

The principal object that I have had in view in telling this story is to remove all doubts from your minds in regard to mythical character of the man called "Johnny Appleseed." Johnny was a kind hearted, inoffensive, harmless old man, never was married, nor settled long in any one place, until he died. Thus he lived and finally died at or about Fort Wayne, in Indiana, in 1850, aged 82 years.

Well, Grandpa, you have saved your nose from the candle smut tonight, and we thank you kindly for the knowledge you have imparted to us in regard to old "Johnny Appleseed." But we didn't think you were so near a hundred years old as to remember all about this very old man. Good night, we'll come again.









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